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Get Ready for the 14th Annual Crews Into Shape Challenge

BY VJOHNSON – FEBRUARY 20, 2014

POSTED IN: NEWS

By Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center Public Affairs



Lt. Jessica Newman, department head for the Naval Health Clinic Charleston (NHCC) Preventive Medicine Department, teaches a hula-hooping class for NHCC staff members as they participate in the 2013 Crews Into Shape challenge. (Photo courtesy of Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center)

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) kicks-off its 14th annual Crews Into Shape challenge in conjunction with National Nutrition Month® and Navy Nutrition Month, Mar. 2.

Crews Into Shape is a four-week challenge that uses a team approach to promote wellness, combining the support of colleagues, friends, and family members to help the entire "Crew" work toward a healthier lifestyle. Each Crew Member earns points for exercising, maintaining or achieving a goal weight, eating fruits and vegetables, and engaging in other healthy activities.

Crews Into Shape is open to the entire Department of Defense (DoD) family and last year, 271 teams, comprised of 1,990 people, participated in the challenge. One of these teams, or "Crews," was led by Lynn Eichhorn, a registered nurse from Naval Health Clinic Charleston, S.C.

She recognized the importance of getting crew members involved. "I engaged the crew to provide messages for the group as well so they weren't all coming from me, and each week a crew member was responsible for walking around and distributing a healthy snack," said Eichhorn. Some of the snacks included dried kiwi, wasabi nuts, grapes, granola, and vegetable chips.

Eichhorn offers sound advice for future crew leaders.

"Commit to your team and encourage them to pitch in," said Eichhorn. "If they see you making an effort, they will get motivated as well."

This clearly worked for Eichhorn, who had several crew members going above and beyond in the challenge. Her team members included the clinic director; a pregnant staff member and her husband, who did not eat any fruits and vegetables prior to the challenge but made a concentrated effort to consume them regularly by the end of the program; and a physically disabled staff member, who spoke with his health care provider prior to the challenge to



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identify exercises he could do to meet the physical activity requirements. He had the only perfect score on the team. Eichhorn and her crew were not alone in their success during the 2013 challenge. An overwhelming majority of individuals who provided feedback about the program indicated the Crews Into Shape helped them improve their daily intake of fruits and vegetables, as well as increase their daily physical activity.

Participants in the 2013 Crews Into Shape challenge came up with creative team events to keep members motivated including 5K runs, infused olive oil and vinegar tastings, recipe swaps, weekly lectures, stair climbing groups, yoga, bowling, and healthy pot lucks.

Following the challenge, 78% of 2013 Crews Into Shape participants who provided feedback said that they planned to eat healthy and stay active after the challenge ended.

To learn more about the program that is motivating healthy changes throughout the DoD, visit NMCPHC's Crews Into Shape website at <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcpchc/health-promotion/Pages/crews-into-shape.aspx>.

Like us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/NavyAndMarineCorpsPublicHealthCenter> to get the latest program updates as well as healthy eating and active living tips.

For more information on healthy living, contact NMCPHC at 757-953-3152.



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